

Current accessibility strategies in audiology practice: a review of the 2019 CAA accessibility survey results

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Objectives: To assess current strategies being used by audiologists to provide an accessible service in Canadian audiology clinics to people who are Deaf/deaf, late deafened, and hard of hearing.

Background: Accessibility is about creating services that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers – including audiology clinics. Areas of interest explored in this project include the technologies and services audiologists provide at their reception desk area, clinic testing area, website, within their workplace policies, counseling and recommendation methods, behaviors used during public presentations, and outcome measures which contribute to providing an accessible service.

Methods: An on-line survey was sent to CAA members consisting of 16 questions using 'Survey Monkey.'

Results: Thirty surveys were completed representing audiologists across Canada. Results demonstrated limited use of accessible technologies and services in audiology clinics with regards to front desk areas, clinical assessment areas, counseling and recommendations, web accessibility, workplace policies on accessibility, public presentations, and the use of outcome measures which quantifies the success of an intervention and the need for further follow-up.

The top barriers to providing accessible technologies or services noted were lack of funding for accessible devices (62.1 %), lack of university training (55.2 %), lack of CE opportunities on accessibility (55.2%), over-focus on hearing aid adoption as the most important outcome measure (51.7 %), and lack of time (51.7 %).

Conclusions: Results examining the use of accessible technologies and services in audiology clinics demonstrates the drastic need for improved services and support for people who are Deaf/deaf, late deafened, and hard of hearing. A total paradigm shift within the field of audiology towards a more accessible service is required along with the need for greater supports for Audiologists to create this improvement in service.